

**PROJECT  
REACH**Roundtable for  
Economic Access  
and Change

REMOVING BARRIERS TO FINANCIAL INCLUSION

# AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP WORKSTREAM

*“To reduce the racial homeownership gap, Project REACH is addressing unnecessary barriers to homeownership and ensuring the mortgage process is fair, objective, and free from bias.”*

— Acting Comptroller of the Currency Michael J. Hsu

## The Project REACH Approach

Project REACH (Roundtable for Economic Access and Change) brings together leaders from banking, business, technology, and national civil rights organizations to reduce specific barriers that prevent full, equal, and fair participation in the nation’s economy. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) recognizes that removing structural barriers to financial inclusion will result in broader participation in the economy and will help millions of people, previously left out of the system, to pursue their American dreams.

## What We Do

The Affordable Homeownership Workstream is addressing the challenges minority individuals and families face when seeking to purchase homes and addressing barriers that prevent their becoming home buyers. Homeownership is the primary way most individuals and families build wealth in the United States. Unfortunately, the homeownership rates for minorities significantly trail non-Hispanic Whites. This Workstream is seeking to:

- Address challenges with closing costs, down payment, appraisals, and underwriting.
- Develop a coordinated housing counseling and financial education program.
- Identify ways to expand affordable single-family inventory.

## What We’ve Done

The Affordable Homeownership Workstream participants have taken steps to expand homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income (LMI) and minority home buyers by:

- Relaunching a program to provide potentially forgivable, interest-free down payment loans to LMI home buyers with no required monthly payments.
- Launching a grant program to provide LMI buyers up to \$5,000 to assist with closing costs.
- Establishing an interest-free down payment and low-closing-cost assistance pilot program to help LMI homebuyers in certain cities the Midwest.

- Launching a grant program of up to \$5,000 for down payment and closing costs to purchase a home in more than 6,700 majority-Black neighborhoods. Borrowers under this initiative using certain programs receive an additional \$500 if they complete a home buyer education course with an approved counseling agency.
- Establishing a program to provide up to \$2,500 to help borrowers, who may not be able to afford the upfront cash needed to refinance under certain loan programs, to refinance their homes to take advantage of lower interest rates.

## Where We're Going

The Affordable Homeownership Workstream participants have taken steps to expand homeownership opportunities for LMI minority home buyers by:

- Identifying ways to eliminate appraisal disparities.
- Identifying ways to more efficiently connect borrowers who have been denied a mortgage with housing counseling agencies that could help them get on the path to future homeownership.
- Evaluating how alternative data that show repayment history for rent and other recurring payments can more effectively be used in the mortgage underwriting process.
- Expanding use of special purpose credit programs.
- Identifying ways to expand the affordable single-family inventory including accessory dwelling units, single-family acquisition and rehabilitation financing, and repurposing of commercial properties for residential use.
- Evaluating ways that credit risk transfer models can be designed to bring about efficiencies in the private mortgage securitization market.
- Seeking greater bank participation in programs that are expanding single-family home financing in Indian Country.

## Workstream Participants

The Project REACH Affordable Home Ownership Workstream is composed of stakeholders who are working to find innovative ways to help minority families build wealth through homeownership.

American Express Bank	National Community	NeighborWorks America
Bank of America	Reinvestment Coalition	Operation HOPE
Citibank	National Diversity Coalition	PNC Bank
City First Broadway Bank	National Fair Housing Alliance	Texas National Bank
Fifth Third Bank	National Urban League	Unidos US
Freddie Mac	Native American Finance	U.S. Bank
Home Free – USA	Officers Association	Wells Fargo Bank
Huntington National Bank	Native American Bank	Zest AI
JPMorgan Chase	Native American Indian Housing	Urban Institute
NAACP	Council	
NAREB Investment Division	Native CDFI Coalition	



For more information on Project REACH, visit [occ.gov/REACH](https://occ.gov/REACH) or scan the code.

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